that matter." Government would take decisions on the gas pipeline based on India's national interest.

Bilateral Talks During SAARC Summit

956. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister held any bilateral talks with the leaders of neighbouring countries at the sidelines of recently held SAARC Summit at Dhaka; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the talks, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Prime Minister, on the sidelines of 13th SAARC Summit in Dhaka on 12-13th November, 2005, met the King of Nepal, the Presidents of Maldives and Sri Lanka, and the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan.

(b) The Prime Minister reiterated to the King of Nepal the importance of restoring multi-party democracy in Nepal as early as possible and the need to take concrete steps in this regard. The Prime Minister emphasized that this would not be possible without the involvement of political parties. The King of Nepal conveyed to the Prime Minister that he remained committed to multi-party democracy and recognized that this would not be possible without involvement of political parties. He said he was prepared to take steps to bring about the restoration of multi-party democracy with the involvement of political parties as early as possible.

The Talks with Maldives covered discussions on existing areas of bilateral cooperation and also India's assistance to maldives in meeting its post-tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation programme.

The Talks with Sri Lanka focused on ways and means of further strentgthening bilateral cooperation.

The Talks with Bangladesh focused on issues relating to Indian Insurgent Groups (IIGs), transit, energy and water resources.

During the Talks with Bhutan, both sides expressed deep satisfaction on the excellent state of relations and committed themselves to the further strengthening of the relationship.

During the Talks with Pakistan, the Prime Minister expressed condolences for the victims of the earthquake of 8th October, 2005, and re-affirmed India's support and assistance to Pakistan. Pakistan's Prime Minister expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by India. He stated that there is trust deficit between India and Pakistan, but added that both the countries are headed in the right direction. Pakistan's Prime Minister also reiterated his country's interest in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. PM reiterated India's concern regarding cross-border terrorism and asked Pakistan to take effective measures to control it. On Pakistan Prime Minister's demand for reduction of Indian troops in Jammu and Kashmir, PM said that this is not possible as long as cross-border terrorism and terrorist violence continue.

Indian stand on IAEA Vienna vote

957. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recently held Joint Working Group meeting at Tehran Iran's Petroleum Minister has expressed that Iran expects India to make amends if there is a next vote of the IAEA in Vienna scheduled for 24th November 2005;

(b) whether India considers that this statement is linked to the future prospects of the on-going energy dialogue between India and Iran; and

(c) whether India has formulated a strategy to remain passive by abstaining from the forthcoming IAEA Vienna vote?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHMMED): (a) and (b) The 2nd Indo-lran Special Joint Working Group on Iran-Pakistan-india gas pipeline project was held in Tehran at the invitation of H.E. M.H. Nejad Hosseinian, Deputy Petroleum Minister for International Affairs, Government of Iran on 24th October 2005. The issue of India's vote at the IAEA was not discussed. The Iranian Embassy in New Delhi has clarified on 28th September 2005 that agreements on the LNG deal and gas pipeline between the two countries were "still in force and passing through their normal process".

(c) The IAEA Board of Governors at its meeting on 24th November 2005 also discussed Iran's nuclear issue. The Board reiterated its support for the resumption of negotiations between Iran and the EU-3. No resolution was presented to the Board.